LENDER AND INSURER TRANSACTION PROCESSING SYSTEM AND METHOD

Field Of the Invention

The present invention relates to transaction processing computer systems, in particular, systems for assisting lenders or insurers in the efficient processing of transactions within their scope of

5   business.

Background Information

For a lender or an insurer, the processing of a transaction entails multiple steps. For example, in a transaction involving

10 a secured loan for the purchase of an item, a lender would receive a loan application, evaluate (e.g., adjudicate, credit score) the applicant, and verify information contained in the application. The loan evaluation process may further include, for example, searches or inquiries of various commercial and

15 government databases to obtain additional information needed to make a loan decision. The lender inquiry may then require to be posted at a credit bureau.

If the loan were granted, then the lender would generate a

20 specified loan agreement for execution by the borrower. The lender would then generally take a security interest if financing a property unit (e.g., the collateral). The rules for recording a security interest may vary by jurisdiction or item (e.g.,the U.C.C. or title interest in the U.S. and the P.P.S.A. in Canada)

25 and are generally effected at the county, state, provincial, or federal level. Recording the security interest can be performed, for example, either manually by the lender or via a service that provides the recording (e.g., via facsimile or electronically).

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Once a transaction is initially processed, tracing an asset, individual, or entity and the recovery of an asset or loan balance due to fraud, theft, or default may require access to,

5 and the involvement of, a multitude of agents and governing agencies and can require substantial resources. Such participating agents may be located over a wide area and need access to a variety of information, documents and databases in a timely manner. For example, upon occurrence of a default

10 condition (e.g., failure to make loan payments to a lender), recovery of the loan collateral (e.g., a property unit) could be voluntary or involuntary. If there was a voluntary surrender of the collateral to the lender, the services of a transporter, appraiser, liquidator, receiver, or attorney might still be

15 needed to complete the recovery process. If the recovery process is involuntary, then in addition to the services identified above, the lender might also need the services of an investigator/recovery, repossession agent/bailiff, skiptrace agent or collection agency to recover the collateral.

20 In a conventional arrangement, a lender or insurer transaction involves extensive human and material resources at each stage of the transaction for manual processing, multiple transcriptions of common information, numerous record searches, and multiple

25 assignments to various agents. Only limited access to pertinent information in a timely manner is available for those who need it. Accordingly, in the conventional process, the transaction typically requires multiple telephone communications, facsimiles, microfiches, hand written documents and printed forms. Each

·30 action in the process gives rise to the opportunity for the introduction of errors and the reduction of centralized control by a lender or insurer. Further, conventional systems do not

transaction.

As such, there is a need for a system which can automatically, on-line link and, based on an access control permission granting process, provide each of a potentially large number of widely distributed participants with specific instructions, relevant information, searches, registrations and required documents in a timely manner to effect their part in the transaction and to create efficiencies at all stages of the transaction process.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention includes an exemplary system and method which provides lenders or insurers on-line processing of transactions via a central data repository with links to various private and public agencies. The system according to an embodiment of the present invention provides in a timely manner on-line access or links to a variety of information, instructions, documents, and databases to authorized agents or persons involved in the transaction that maybe located over a wide geographical area. Further, access to the system can be controlled, for example, via an access permission granting process.

The system of the present invention includes, for example, a central data repository (e.g., a relational database) and interfaces (e.g., software modules) that provide the capability to read data from and write data to the data repository. The system can utilize, for example, a relational database computer program running on a client-server or Internet based architecture and using a WINDOWS graphical user interface.

For example, an Application/Customer Profile Module according to

an embodiment of the present invention captures and stores data on the customer and the transaction at the time a customer applies for a loan or insurance. A lender, insurer, dealer, broker or anyone seeking financing or insurance can use this

5   module to input required information in the central repository.

Upon completion of the application/customer profile, information required by the lender or insurer for their adjudication processing can be, for example, electronically provided from the

10   central repository of the present invention via an Adjudication Extract Module and uploaded the lenders/insurer's proprietary adjudication process or the Adjudication Module of the present invention. The lender or insurer can request required searches from a host of commercial and government agencies via a Search

15   Module of the present invention for information and/or documents relevant to their adjudication process specification requirements. The Search Module also can provide the user with the current fees, charges and balances for the search costs on their account. Desired documents and information from a search

20   can be stored in the central repository.

A Document Module according to an embodiment of the present invention generates, warehouses, and electronically delivers database driven or digitally imaged documents (including, for

25   example, mortgages, general security agreements, chattel mortgages, conditional sales contracts, leases, customer identification, policies, registrations, titles, appraisals, bills of sale, statutory notices, or any other documents deemed necessary or required) for processing, confirming or realizing

30   upon a loan or insurance transaction. The database driven documents are, for example, electronically generated and delivered to the required user in a standardized format

consistent with the required specification of the particular
lender or insurer based on the transaction type and
jurisdictional variance of the transaction.

5   These documents are made available, for example based on a SQL
       query of the central repository following an access control
       permission granting process, authorization levels, the identity
       of the requesting party and the type of transaction contemplated
       for their use, (e.g., personal, audit or recovery reasons). For
10   example, in a loan default and collateral recovery process, a
       lender would select a recovery agent and grant account access
       permission to the agent. Upon receipt of the permission, the
       recovery agent would then be able to access the central
       repository for the assignment and instructions from the lender.
15   The agent would be allowed to retrieve a digital copy of the
       security agreement or lien/title registration and generate a
       specified database driven default notice or seizure notice. Upon
       seizure of the collateral, a specified database driven statutory
       notice of intention to sell a property unit could be generated
20   according to an embodiment of the present invention. In an
       insurance claim process, for example, an adjuster could retrieve
       a digital copy of the policy, application or appraisal and upon
       completion of the required task generate a database driven proof
       of claim. The imaged and database driven documents are
25   accessible from the central repository.

       Upon the approval of a transaction, a Registration Module
       according to an embodiment of the present invention can register,
       file, report, account for and provide online access to or links
30   for registrations of, for example, liens, titles, licenses,
       writs, claims, transactions, thefts, frauds, defaults,
       recoveries, seizures, legal actions or notification of an update

to a credit bureau in any given jurisdiction such as a municipality, county, province, state, or federal authority via electronic access to a governing agency or local agent. If the governing agency cannot provide electronic registrations, the system and method according to an embodiment of the present invention can generate the required form document (e.g., database driven registration form) and deliver the form to an agent for registration via the Document Module. The Registration Module also can provide the user with the current fees, charges and balances for the registration costs on their account. The results of these transactions can be retained in the central repository.

Once the transaction is completed, an Electronic Invoice, Billing and Payment Process Module according to an embodiment of the present invention can provide electronic invoicing or payment processing of the transaction.

Upon notification of a recovery condition, a Recovery Module can direct the respective information and recovery assignment to a variety of commissioned and non-commissioned agents such as asset managers, investigating agents, skip tracers, recovery agents, bailiffs, impound yards, shipping agents, appraisers, adjusters, sales agents, attorneys, receivers, trustees, property managers, real estate brokers, escrow or title agents, insurance carriers, collection agencies, reporting agencies, credit bureaus, police, customs, INS (Immigration, Naturalization Services), NICB(National Insurance Crime Bureau), ICPB(Insurance Crime Prevention Bureau), INTERPOL, IRS (Internal Revenue Service), Revenue Canada, Receiver General or any other governing agency required, etc. In combination with the Document Module, Search Module and Recovery Module, and subject to, for example, an

access control permission granting process, the present invention
provides electronic communication and access for the agents to
pertinent pre-selected, instruction, information, searches, and
documents as may be required by those agents to complete their
5   assignment task.

The system of the present invention can communicate with users
and a variety of other systems over a conventional communication
network, such as a proprietary connection (*e.g.*, direct
10   connection or dial up) or over a public network (*e.g.*, the
Internet).

Brief Description of The Drawings
FIG. 1 is an exemplary block diagram of a communications network
15   with the system of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an exemplary block diagram of illustrating the
operation of a system in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 3 is an exemplary flowchart of a transaction processing
20   according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Invention
FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing a transaction processing system
25   10 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention in
communication with a plurality of other computer systems 31-44.
The transaction processing system 10 can include, for example, a
mainframe computer or server computer, such as an IBM mainframe
or NT server that executes a computer program operating in
30   accordance with the method for transaction processing according
to an embodiment of the present invention. For example,
transaction processing system 10 can be implemented in accordance

with the present invention with a conventional database
management system such as SQL SERVER on a mini computer, personal
computer, or mainframe computer to implement the functions
described below with, for example, reference to Figure 2. The

5   various computers 10 and 31-44 are coupled to a communication
network 20 that allows them to communicate with each other. The
communication network 20 can be, for example, proprietary (*e.g.*,
a direct or dial-up connection) or public (*e.g.*, the Internet).

10   As shown in FIG. 1, the transaction processing system 10
communicates with the plurality of other computer systems, which
may be involved in lending, insuring, registry, searching, or
recovery transactions. Such other computer system may include,
for example, one or more of a recovery agent (*e.g.*, bailiff)

15   computer 31, an appraisal agent computer 32, a sales agent
computer 33, an escrow/title agent computer 34, an attorney
computer 35, a property management computer 36, a
receiver/trustee computer 37, a real estate agency computer 38,
an insurance computer 39, a collection agent computer 40, a

20   lender computer 41, a government agency computer 42, a
dealer/broker computer 44 and any other user computer 43 for
entities requiring access to the transaction processing system
10. The computers 31-44 can be, for example, client computers in
a client server architecture, the server computer being the

25   transaction processing system 10. The computer 31-44 can
include, for example, conventional personal desktop computers
located at respective commissioned and non-commissioned agent
locations to provide the agent access to the transaction
processing system 10.

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The operation of the transaction processing system 10 of the
present invention and the interactions between the system 10 and

the various computer systems 31-44 will now be described with reference to FIG. 2.

FIG. 2 is a functional block diagram illustrating the operation of an exemplary embodiment of the system of the present invention. The exemplary embodiment shown in FIG. 2 includes a transaction processing system 10 further including a centralized repository 100 for storing data (e.g., a Direct Access Storage Device (DASD) storing a conventional relational database) and a general purpose computer having a CPU 101 and a memory 102 storing a plurality of software modules for carrying out the various functions performed by the transaction processing system 10 according to an embodiment of the present invention. In addition, the system 10 includes an I/O device such as a keyboard or mouse with an associated display device and a communications interface 104 providing an interface to communications network 20.

To facilitate the process of registering and recovering an asset (e.g., a property unit) or loan balance, the system according to an embodiment of the present invention acquires information about the property unit and the individual or entity involved in the transaction. For example, information about the property unit, individual, entity or terms of the transaction (e.g, loan value, interest rate) is acquired and stored in the central repository 100 of the system of the present invention at the time the property unit, individual or entity is financed or insured. For example, in a manner known in the art, the relational database forming the repository 100 can include tables for customer information (e.g., address, birth date, etc.), as well as description of the collateral or property unit, insured or financed, the lender or insurer, and the dealer, broker or other

entity information entered into the central repository 100 via the Application/Customer Profile Module 110.

An Application/Customer Profile Module 110 according to an embodiment of the present invention captures and stores data about a customer and/or a property unit at the time the lender, insurer, customer or dealer/broker on behalf of a customer applies for a loan, financing, or insurance on a property unit. For example, the loan application process can be performed at a lender computer 41 located at a lender or insurer location (e.g., an automobile dealership or a lending institution office), thereby providing direct access of customer information into repository 100 via communication network 20 and Module 110. Lender computer 41 would include, for example, a client portion of the Profile Module 110 to enable communication with server portion of the Profile Module 110 resident on the transaction processing system 10. Alternatively, the software needed by a user of the system can be provided by the system 10 subject to, for example, an access control permission granting process. For example, when a user connects to the transaction processing system 10 via a dial-up or Internet connection, the user can be provided with a log-in and password to access the transaction processing system 10.

Accordingly, a dealer, broker, lender, insurer, individual, or entity can use the Profile Module 110 to provide the relevant transaction information to the transaction processing system 10. According to an embodiment of the present invention, a dealer or broker can interact with a designated lending institution or multiple lending institutions (e.g., with regard to obtaining customer financing for a vehicle purchase), and, for example, the office of the lending institution that actually finances the

transaction (e.g., a particular branch of a lender) can be associated with the transaction via the central repository 100. Thus, performance of the lender, insurer, dealer/broker, or customer and the type of transactions being processed can be monitored via the transaction processing system 10.

As described above, information regarding the property unit and the customer (*e.g.*, the person borrowing money or obtaining insurance in connection with the property unit) can be entered into the repository 100 via the Module 110. Such information is entered, for example, at a lender computer 41, an insurer computer 39, a dealer/broker computer 44 or any other user computer 43 (FIG. 1) and communicated to the system 10 of the present invention over the communication network 20. The interface for the Profile Module 110 can be implemented using, for example, a WINDOWS graphical user interface to facilitate the entry of information. The provision of information directly into the transaction processing system 10 eliminates the need to subsequently re-enter information about the transaction, thereby minimizing errors introduced due to transcription mistakes.

The Application/Customer Profile Module 110 can provide, for example upon completion of processing the transaction information (e.g., the capture of information for the property unit and customer), the information to be used in the adjudication process. For example, the required information for a lenders' or insurers' adjudication process can be extracted in a known manner from the central repository 100 via the Adjudication Extract Module 115 which could then download the information to, for example, the lenders' or insurers' proprietary adjudication process. A lender or insurer has the option to, for example, adjudicate and approve a transaction based on their own required

specifications or utilize an Adjudication Module 185 provided
according to an embodiment of the present invention employing
conventional adjudication processes (e.g., credit scoring, risk
rating). This information is communicated to, for example, the
lender or insurer's computer system 41 or 39 via the
communication network 20 (FIG 1).

A Search Module 125 allows the lender or insurer to perform
qualifying searches on a variety of available databases 130, such
as, for example, the Department of State and Ministry of Consumer
and Commercial Relations, including PPSA (in Canada the Personal
Property Security Act), UCC (the U.S. Uniform Commercial Code),
Land Titles & Registry, Bulk Sales, Corporate, Business and
Partnerships; Department of Transport (MOT, DMV) including
Licensing, tags and VIN; the Attorney General's Office, including
the Sheriff's Department for writs, Family Court for divorces,
Civil Court for Small Claims, General, Divisional and Appeals,
Criminal Court for convictions, Surrogate Court for Estates,
Wills, Probates and Landlord/Tenant; the Receiver General's
Office, Revenue Canada, IRS, Internal Revenue Service and
Registrar's Office for change of name, births, deaths and
marriages; Municipal offices for tax assessments, building codes
and zoning; Federal Departments including the Official Receiver's
Office, Federal Corporations and the Banking Authority for
Debentures, FBDB (Federal Business Development Bank), Bank Act,
Immigration (verification of status), Ships Registry and Aviation
matters; the office of Superintendent of Bankruptcy, Official
Receiver; Insurance Claims; various credit bureaus; and utilities
including telephone, cable, gas, electric and water.

The Search Module 125 will search, for example, those databases
130 that are relevant to the transaction being processed. In a

conventional manner, the search may be automatically conducted
(e.g., for a credit bureau search) or a lender or insurer may
have to, for example, print an information screen from their host
system and complete a search request form, transcribe the

5   required search request information and forward the search
request to a governing agency or agent to complete the search.
This request form may be completed, for example, by telephone
communication, facsimile, mail or hand delivery. The results of
the search are then forwarded back to the lender or insurer for

10   further manual processing and updating of their host system.

For example, if the transaction is a loan on a used vehicle, the
Search Module 125 could, as part of the loan processing operation
in Adjudication Extract Module 115 or Adjudication Module 185,

15   perform a search of credit bureau databases, such as EQUIFAX, to
verify the current credit status or confirm the credit history of
the applicant. The Search Module 125 could also perform a lien
search on the vehicle in various recording offices to ascertain
that the vehicle being financed is not subject to a pre-existing

20   lien or search a DMV database to insure that the vehicle
information is accurate and that the vehicle is not stolen or
identified as a total loss salvage. According to an embodiment
of the present invention, not only can multiple search locations
be searched quickly, as the central repository 100 is built up

25   with various transactions, the central repository 100 can become
a central searching location to ascertain the status of a
property unit.

The Search Module 125 also could be utilized in a recovery
-30   operation to verify the current information of the applicant and
identify any unknown liens or judgments against the applicant or
property unit for proper and statutory recovery processing via,

e.g., dial-up or Internet access to databases 130. Since an
embodiment of the present invention utilizes a relational
database as central repository 100, the results of the searches
performed by Search Module 125 could be stored in tables

5   associated with the transaction. The Search Module can, for
example, provide the user with the current fees, charges and
balances for the search costs on their account.

In the exemplary embodiment of the present invention shown in

10   FIG. 2, the system also includes a Documents Module 165 which
can, for example, generate digitally imaged or database generated
documents along with providing warehousing and electronic
delivery of documents such as, for example, contracts, mortgages,
general security agreements, chattel mortgages, conditional sales

15   contracts, leases, customer identification, policies,
registrations, titles, statutory or other notices, bills of sale
or any other documents deemed necessary or useful for processing
and confirming a finance or insurance transaction. The documents
delivered by the Document Module 165 can be made available, for

20   example, subject to an access control permission granting
process, to those who may require them for personal, audit or
recovery reasons.

Digitally imaged documents can be generated by, for example,

25   conventionally scanning a document and storing the scanned (e.g.,
digitally imaged) document in the central repository 100.
Similarly, desired documents can be generated from the data
stored in the central repository 100 using, for example,
conventional SQL queries. In addition, the Documents Module 165

30   can provide database driven documents which are electronically
generated and delivered to the required user in a standardized
format consistent with the required specification of the

particular lender or insurer based on the transaction type and jurisdictional variance of the transaction. For example, the same transaction document may require different terms in different jurisdictions.

Such documents are made available based on, for example, an access control permission granting process including authorization and the identity of the requesting party as well as the type of transaction contemplated for their use. If document imaging is performed at the client side of the system, then for example, imaged documents can be sent to the central repository via the communication network 20. For example, a recovery agent could submit digitally imaged photos of the recovered property unit for subsequent on-line use by an appraiser via the central repository 100.

According to an embodiment of the present invention, the documents made available to a user can vary as a function of the access control permission granted and identity of the user accessing the transaction processing system 10 and the type of transaction that is the subject of the process. For example, in a loan or insurance transaction a dealer/broker upon approval of the transaction from the lender or insurer could generate the required loan agreement or insurance policy for execution by the customer. Similarly, in the recovery process an agent could receive an assignment from the transaction processing system 10 and the documents needed by the recovery agent, such as the security agreement, copy of the registered security interest, seizure request, statutory notices, searches and instructions, would be provided. In contrast, a different set of documents, such as a bankruptcy secured proof of claim, security agreement and registered security interest, would be made available to a

trustee in bankruptcy involved in the same transaction. The
selection of particular documents can be performed, for example,
using a look-up table that identifies the types of documents that
can be provided to a dealer/broker or agent in particular areas

5   of the transaction processing system 10. The access control
permission process can include, for example, a login and password
provided to a user that is associated with a profile for the user
stored in transaction processing system 10. For example, a
bailiff agent would have an associated profile in the system 10

10   that would authorize the bailiff access to particular accounts
and documents.

A Registration, Filing and Reporting Module 135 allows lenders
and insurers to register, file, report or transfer transactions

15   on a property unit, individual or entity with the system 10 of
the present invention. For example, as a function of the
information stored in the repository 100 for a particular
transaction, such as a customer's name, address, birth date,
social insurance number, the Module 135 could automatically

20   generate and file a lien registration in the appropriate
recording office (e.g., a provincial or state county recording
office). For example, for offices that accept electronic
filings, the Module 135 could generate and transmit the
appropriate electronic document or data via direct dialup or

25   Internet access to the governing agency. If the recording office
did not accept electronic filings, then the required information
could be sent by Module 135 to a local agency who could generate
the required registration form via, for example, the Documents
Module 165 of the central repository 100 to manually complete the

30   recording process.

Therefore, for example, information provided to the Application

Customer Profile Module 110 is stored in the central repository 100 and the required information can then be accessed as an electronic file extract (e.g., a predetermined compilation of information from the central repository) by the Registration,

5   Filing and Reporting Module 135, which then updates the relevant recording office's database 130 with respect to a transaction. Information regarding the registered, filed, reported or transferred transactions also can be stored in the repository 100, which can be subsequently searched on-line. Thus, according

10   to an embodiment of the present invention, a single data storage area (e.g., central repository 100) can be searched electronically to identify recorded interests for an individual or transaction, whereas without the present invention, multiple recording offices would have to be searched, many manually, to

15   accomplish the same search. According to an embodiment of the present invention, the public can be given limited access to search the registered information within the repository 100 through a public network such as the Internet. The Registration Module also can provide the user with the current fees, charges

20   and balances for the registration costs on their account.

In the exemplary embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 2, the system also includes an Electronic Invoice, Billing and Payment Module 195, which can, for example, upon completion

25   of a transaction, generate an invoice or billing to a customer for insurance premium or loan payments from information contained in the central repository 100. Payment Module 195 can include, for example, conventional off the shelf software to track payment history, provide electronic transmission of an invoice or

30   generate hard copies of invoices. The underlying payment information would be uploaded, for example, from a lending institution.

A Recovery Module 140 allows any lender, insurer or agent to notify the transaction processing system 10 of a default condition with respect to a particular transaction and to assign and process any part of their transaction in the recovery of a

5   property unit or loan balance. Thus, in the event of default, fraud or theft, the Recovery Module 140 allows a lender, insurer or agent to assign and report the recovery to the desired agent(s) and provides on-line access to selected information and documents from the central repository 100. Thus, with the

10   Recovery Module 140 according to an embodiment of the present invention, a lender, insurer or agent can assign, communicate and follow up with the recovery process to any of a variety of agents involved in the recovery process.

15   Commissioned agents include, for example, asset managers, recovery agents/bailiffs, special investigators, skip locators, impound yards, shipping agents, appraisers, receivers, trustees, attorneys, property managers, real estate brokers, sales agents, escrow/title agents, adjusters, insurance agencies, collection

20   agencies. A lender, insurer or agent can also communicate via the Recovery Module 140 with a variety of noncommissioned agents including, for example, police, customs, INS, Immigration, NICB, ICPB, INTERPOL, etc.

25   Thus, according to an embodiment of the present invention, the Recovery Module 140 allows for real time interaction between the lender or insurer and recovery agent. For example, the recovery agent receives the assignment online from the transaction processing system 10 and responds via the communication network

30   20 back to the system 10 of the present invention. The Recovery Module 140 also allows the lender or insurer to assign accounts to multiple agents by, for example, selecting the authorized

agent from a pick list (e.g., a pull-down menu) and directing the
agent, by way of an authorized instruction pick list (e.g., a
pull-down menu for types of actions such as repossession or
appraisal) to proceed with any particular requests identified in
5   the instruction notes provided to the agent.

For example, the seizure of a property unit would be assigned to
a recovery agent/bailiff after a skip tracer has located the
security (property unit). Once the unit has been seized, an
10   appraisal agent can be assigned to appraise the unit. After
appraisal, a sales agent can be assigned to sell the unit. After
the sale, if there is an outstanding balance due, an attorney or
collection agency can be assigned for the collection of the
balance. These interactions would take place via the Recovery
15   Module 140 according to an embodiment of the present invention
and provides for centralized automation of a process that prior
to the present invention required multiple disparate operations
that were not centrally coordinated with a common database to
facilitate a lender's or insurer's recovery of a property unit or
20   loan balance in the event of a default condition in a
transaction.

As described above with reference to FIG. 1, the computer systems
31-44 of such agents are coupled to the system 10 of the present
25   invention via a proprietary or public network 20. In addition,
once a unit is seized or recovered, according to an embodiment of
the present invention, the Recovery Module 140, in combination
with the Documents Module 165, can automatically generate
documents required regarding the transaction. For example,
30   statutory notices required providing the debtor with a right of
redemption or notice of sale of the security (property unit) can
be automatically generated by the Documents Module 165 via

information contained in the centralized repository 100 such as customer name, address, type of security agreement, agreement date, description of property unit and method of sale.

5   As mentioned above with regard to the Registration, Filing and Reporting Module 135, the Recovery Module 140 also preferably provides an interface that is tailored to each agent who interacts with the system of the present invention. In addition, certain features of the interfaces provided by the Recovery

10   Module 140 might be common to more than one agent. For instance, the Recovery Module 140 can allow agents to electronically generate standardized invoicing for their services. The invoices can be provided to the party requesting the agent's services.

15   The system of the present invention can also facilitate the processing of appraisals using the Appraisal Module 180. The Appraisal Module 180 can be used, for example, in the adjudication stage or at the recovery stage. For example, when a property unit is being financed, insured, in default or stolen,

20   the insurer or lender may choose to appraise the property unit to determine its value and condition prior to approval of the application or recovery. The Appraisal Module 180 will provide to the appraisal agent, for example, an interface that is tailored to the purpose of the appraisal agent. For example, the

25   appraisal agent will receive a prescribed tailored form to complete an appraisal of a specified property unit along with other documents, such as authorization and instructions needed by the appraisal agent to accomplish the appraisal task. When the appraisal agent is ready to provide the appraisal, the system of

30   the present invention will present the agent with, for example, an appraisal screen in which the appraisal agent enters information on a specified standardized form. The format for the

appraisal screen, as well as other screens generated according to
the present invention, can be generated using a conventional
WINDOWS graphical user interface. The completed electronic form
and digital photos (if any) from the appraiser are then

5   transmitted to the requesting party (*e.g.*, lender) and/or stored
in the central repository 100. Different forms are also provided
for different type of property units. Thus, the system of the
present invention provides a form which is appropriate for the
type of property (*e.g.*, a motor vehicle, marine vessel,

10   recreational vehicle, or real property would each have a unique
form).

As mentioned previously, the various users of the system 10 of
the present invention can be granted access control permission to

15   different levels of access to the repository 100 and to the
various documents and functions of the system. For example, the
general public would be allowed to access public registration and
search information but would not be allowed to access customer
loan or insurance application data. Access to the latter data can

20   be restricted, for example, to authorized lenders, insurers and
agents.

A Recovery Search Module 170 provides, for example, limited
public access to the central repository 100 for the searching and

25   identification of property units which have been pledged as
security, are pending recovery, stolen or are a total loss.
Also, Module 170 could identify, for example, a writ of seizure
and sale against a party in a specified jurisdiction. Access to
the Recovery Search Module 170 may be direct or public (Internet)

30   and thus anyone that identifies a property unit contained in the
central repository 100 via the Recovery Search Module 170 could
then contact the lender, insurer or recovery agent to report the

location of the property unit and receive compensation for so doing (e.g., a reward). For example, a shipping agent could search, via Module 170, the vehicle identity number (VIN) of a vehicle about to be containerized for export and receive

5   confirmation that the vehicle is stolen or, if the lender or insurer has changed the status of the transaction record for the vehicle to indicate a default, lien, or stolen status. The agent would then, for example, be requested to contact the lender, insurer, or recovery agent to arrange recovery of the property

10   unit and to receive a reward.

A Business Intelligence Reporting Module 175 according to an embodiment of the present invention provides lenders and insurers the ability to analyze and view trends and generate reports from

15   any selected information contained in the central repository 100. For example, reports are generated utilizing data from the central repository 100 and presented using a custom code (e.g., SQL queries written by the user) or business intelligence software such as COGNOS Powerplay or similar products. Examples

20   of the types of business intelligence reports include, for example, defaults as a percentage of the loan portfolio, thefts or total losses as a percentage of policies issued, repossession by specific property unit, lender or branch of lender, thefts by property unit, geographic location of thefts by property unit,

25   types of property units financed, dealer/broker transactions, etc. Business intelligence could also be used as a factor in the adjudication process. For example, vehicles having a high loss repossession rate can be identified and assigned a lower credit score for loans on such vehicles or certain vehicles experiencing

30   a high theft rate or certain driver profiles with a high accident rate could be assessed a higher risk premium.

An Inventory Sales Module 190 provides for disposal of a property unit after its recovery. For example, a bankruptcy trustee, sales agent, liquidator, recovery agent or anyone empowered to sell a property unit can place the property unit in, for example, a database table of the central repository 100 for access by the public interested in purchasing the property unit. For example, once the property unit is provided to the Inventory Module 190, bids can be submitted electronically in the required format and a winning bid selected for acceptance and further processing. As the Inventory ·· 190 is connected to the central repository 100, bu··· ed prospects can access, for example, the A~ ·view pictures and information about the

Ii. present invention, com. tion processing system 10 and computer for example, a queue manager. For example, w..i.... directed to an agent (or multiple agents) from a ie. insurer computer 31, an agent is selected from an agent p..· (e.g., abc recovery agent), an instruction is selected from . instruction pick list (e.g., seize property unit) and the instruction is then sent electronically to the selected agent by the Recovery Module 140 (e.g, via communications network 20). The account instruction can also include, for example, a bring forward (BF) dateline for the expected completion of the transaction task requested and automatically queues a reminder to the agent if the account has not been updated and the transaction task has not been completed by the required deadline. It further provides the user a queue to identify a list of outstanding accounts requiring action.

This queue is indicated, for example, as a color-coded lightbulb

icon at the agent's computer. For example, when instructions are sent or queued to the agent, the lightbulb icon will appear at the agent's computer screen. A different color lightbulb indicates the urgency and priority level of the instructions.

5   The agent can retrieve the instruction by, for example, clicking on the lightbulb icon. As a result of clicking on the lightbulb icon, a work list of accounts appears in priority with instructions to be preformed by the agent. Clicking on a specific account links the agent to the particular account. The

10   agent can then send or queue updates on the status of the account, request more information, or indicate completion of the assignment or transaction with the supporting information to the requesting client via the transaction processing system 10 by clicking on the required client selected from a client pick list

15   and saving the request. Once the agent has sent the response or inquiry back to the client, a similar lightbulb icon will appear on the client computer to identify a transaction. In addition, notes (e.g., status updates) can be entered for a transaction by any party including the date, time and identity of the party

20   generating the note. Further, these notes are stored as part of the transaction information in the central repository 100 and are available for use by other users of the transaction processing system 10.

25   The various modules described above according to an embodiment of the present invention can be implemented in software stored in the memory 102 of the transaction processing computer 10 according to an embodiment of the present invention and can be developed, for example, using any WINDOWS-based programming

30   application such as Visual Basic, Delphi or Powerbuilder. Further, in a manner known in the art, computers 31-44 can include a complementary portion of the modules stored in the

memory of computers 31-44 to enable interaction with the modules in a client-server architecture.

Figure 3 illustrates an exemplary flowchart for an embodiment of the method for transaction processing according to an embodiment of the present invention. In step 3010, transaction information is received at, for example, the transaction processing system 10. For example, the transaction information includes the customer data as well as a description of the property unit involved in the transaction. The transaction can be provided to the system 10 via communication network 20 from a lender or insurer computer system 41. In step 3020, the transaction information is added to a central repository. The central repository includes, for example, a conventional relational database that is remotely accessible.

In step 3030, a default condition is identified and agent(s) are assigned to a recovery process. As described previously, a default condition includes a default on a loan balance or a theft of a property unit. The lender for the property unit can notify the transaction processing system 10 of the default condition, for example by a direct connection or Internet connection to the system 10 and interaction with the appropriate menu choices provided by the system 10. Also via the selection of appropriate menu choices, the lender can assign the required agents for the recovery process.

In step 3040, the recovery process is centrally coordinated by the transaction processing system 10 utilizing the central repository 100. As described previously, all of the information required for the recovery process is stored in central repository 100. Accordingly, agents involved in the recovery process can

communicate electronically with the transaction processing system 10 to obtain the information necessary to carry out the assigned task as well as provide the results of each task to the central repository 100, where the information is available for use by

5   other agents in the recovery process. As indicated previously, the access to the system 10 and the types of information provided to an agent is determined as a function of the identity (e.g., function) and access control permission granted by the client of the agent and the type of property unit involved in the

10   transaction.

The method for transaction processing also allows other actions to be performed. For example, the storage of transaction information in a central location allows for searching in a

15   single location to obtain information that otherwise would require multiple searches in disparate locations (e.g., multiple searches for lien jurisdictions in multiple jurisdictions are avoided according to an embodiment of the present invention). Also, the central repository of transaction information can be

20   utilized prior to a default condition generate security interest documents tailored for particular jurisdictions and also automate the filing of the security interests automatically. The documents generated according to an embodiment of the present invention avoid manual transcription errors as the information is

25   provided from the central repository.